

[2]

the Astonishment of all its Beholders. Besides those (properly called) *Comets* engendred in the Elementary Region, it is supposed there be some other new Stars sometimes seen above the Moon in the Aetherial Region, such as that which appeared in *Cassiopea*, in the Year 1574. every way like a Star in Form and Light, save only its Splendor and Magnitude exceeded the greatest of Planets. This could not properly be called a *Comet*: 1. Because it removed not from that Point of Heaven wherein it first appeared, but kept constant in the Constellation till it disappeared. 2. Because it continued in view for a whole Year, and more than a Quarter. 3. Because it had neither Hair nor Tail or Train, as *Comets* have; which likewise remove from one part of Heaven to another, and never continue so long as that did. 'Tis not improbable that such new Stars God (for a time) withdraws from Men's sight that the Sign of his *Anger* or *Favour* might be the more admired: For these do not waste away, as (properly called) *Comets* do; but only lie hid from the Eye, seeing Heaven cannot admit of new Bodies. That Star which appeared to the Wise Men, *Matth. 2*, was not a Natural, but a Miraculous Star. 1. Because it shone not in the Celestial, but in the Elementary Region; yea, in the lowest part of it, so as to guide the three Men to a certain House over which it stood. 2. Because it had not the Motion of a Natural Star, but such as was Accommodated every way to the Travel of the Wise Men. 3. Its Progress was unequal, sometimes *Appearing*, and sometimes *Disappearing*. 4. It did not only shine forth by *Night*, but also by *Day*. Yea, 5. With such a Splendour as far exceeded not only that of the Stars, but also the Sun it self; as *Ignatius Chrysostom*, &c. do testifie. Some say that Star in *Matth. 2*, was the Holy Ghost which appeared (at Christ's Baptism) in the Form of a Dove, as at his Birth in the Form of a Star, being most Consistent with those Eastern Sages; For as a mighty Draught of Fish was the aptest Sign to make *Peter* (a Fisher man) to follow Christ, so this Sign of a Star was best accommodated to these Men of the East, it being most familiar to them in their frequent Study of the Stars. But more probably *Chrysostom* judgeth it was an Angel [*Angeli*] a certain invisible Power to be the Guide of their Journey, as the Pillar of Glory was *Israel's* in the Wilderness. *Exod. 13. 21*.

and many do affirm that it was the same Angel who appeared
 also to the Shepherds. *Isa. 63. 9.* But the Elementary Comets can-
 not (in any proper sense) be called Stars (though their common
 Name be Blazing Stars.) Because, 1. They have a different Form,
 no way congruous to that of Stars. 2. They grow Greater and
 Lesser. 3. They have an Uncertain and Vagabond Motion. 4. Their
 Matter is an Hot and Dry Exhalation, which is Slimy and Sul-
 phureous; and which being spent, they vanish away. Those things
 hold no Congruity with proper Stars. Philosophy saith, that
 those Comets are composed of a Matter full of Metalline or Mine-
 ral Vapours, which is both thrust out of the Bowels of the Earth
 by an Internal Heat from the Subterraneous Spirits, and extracted
 thence also by an External Heat from the Celestial Bodies; whereby
 likewise it is drawn up into the Upper Region. One part of this
 Fuliginous Smoak, thrusting up and cleaving close to another, till
 it become as big as a Mountain, then it hangs pendulously, and
 mellowly kindly into a Combustible Substance. Then takes it
 fire; and the Colour of that Star by whose force it is Generated
 and Governed. And when all this is done, though it be of a vast
 Magnitude, yet through the great Distance of Place, it seems to
 us as a very little Spangle or Spur Rowel, if severed from its Train
 or Streamer. Touching these Comets, These four things are prin-
 cipally considerable after their Product or Generation. 1. Their
Form. 2. Their *Colour.* 3. Their *Motion.* 4. Their *Signification.*
 1. Of their *Form*, which is various: one Comet hath a *Beard*; ano-
 ther a *Tail*, and a third is *Hairy* round about. This flows from the
 Flame of the fire Vapour diversly dispersed. 1. If it spread its
 Flame upon its farther part, then it is called *major, Barbatus*, a
 Bearded Comet; as having the Flame (as a Man's Beard, or a Horses
 Main) hanging downward. 2. If from the latter part the Flame
 sputters out behind, following after the Body, then it is called *Can-
 datus*, a Tailed Comet. But 3. If it spit Fire from all parts round
 about, then it is called *crinitus*, an Hairy Comet, when it is sur-
 rounded with Rays of Fire, as the Bushy Head is with Hair. Thus
 the diversity of Flames produceth diversity of Forms in them, yet
 mostly such as have Trains or Tails; for the hinder part (being
 not so compact as the former) soonest taketh Fire, and sputters

out a Flame, as we see in *Saturn* or *Jupiter* shew a long Bolome
 or the Tail of a *Peacock*. Of their Colour, which Differeth
 they derive from the Dominion of the Planet in their Generation,
 which may easily be discerned by their various Colours. *Comets*
 have their Dusky and Leaden Colour from *Saturn*, Splendid from
Jupiter, Fiery from *Mars*, Golden from the *Sun*, Silver from the
Moon, Yellow from *Venus*, and of changed Colours from *Mer-
 cury*: And all these various Colours are supposed to be various In-
 dications of differing Natures, as the Planets (from whence they
 deriue them) do differ in their Natures and Influences one from
 another. Of their Motion, *Comets* are of an Erraticke Motion,
 as the new Stars imitate the fixed Stars, so do *Comets* imitate
 the Planets in their Motions. Some are moved according to the
 Motion of the *Primum Mobile* (to speak on Hypothesis) to wit, from
 East to West, but some slower fulfilling that Motion, and others
 more swiftly exceeding it. Their Motion is therefore called *Erra-
 tick*, because it is not Regular and Certain, as that of the fixed
 Stars is, whose Rising and Setting are certainly known; but the
 Motion of *Comets* is sometimes nearer, and sometimes further
 off from the *Zodiack*, as the Motion of the Planets is: Yet not
 altogether as the Planets, which never remove far from the *Zodi-
 ack*, but have always certain and well known Bounds of their Mo-
 tions: whereas *Comets* have an Irregular Motion, and (as to the
Zodiack) plainly Eccentricke, wandering far from it in their remote
 Appearances, and though Motion from East to West be Regular,
 yet this happens by Accident, only because this Upper Region of
 the Air (wherein *Comets* are both begotten and bred) is whirled
 about with the Heavens; hence the *Comets* therein whirled about
 with it. 4. Of their Signification. The principal thing intended
 to wit, the Prognosticks of them. 'Tis true, there be some who
 deny altogether their Significancy, as *Erastus*, *Quarles* and others;
 but 'tis too manifest that *Comets* are not mute things, but that
 they are Signs which God placeth in Heaven, to preach something
 to Men on Earth. No Man in his right Mind can say, that the
 most wise God doth make any thing in vain, nor that the Father
 of Lights should hang out such a strange and stupendous Light

up aloft (to be seen far and wide) and this not to portend some extraordinary thing. Consult Antiquity, there is found 1. That Greek Proverb, [*ἄσπερον ἀπὸ κακοῦ*] There is no Comet which brings not some Evil. 2. That Verse of Manilius,

[*Nunquam Futilibus Resplendunt Ignibus Aether.*]

God never fires his Beacon (set upon so high a Hill) but those below had need look to themselves. That other True Verse (which is a Synonymon & Symbolizeth with the two former

[*Et Nunquam Caelo Spectati Impune Cometa*]

That is, never doth the Earth scape Scott-free, when Heaven holds forth a Blazing Star to her View. This is confirmed by all Histories, especially those of later Times, whereof I could give many Instances. The Chronology of Comets (to go no higher than the 13th Century after Christ to this present) doth afford us most Direful Effects of many Comets frequently appearing within that compass of time, a particular Account whereof a single sheet cannot completely comprehend, especially to Discourse upon them all, Physically, Politically and Theologically. The Rules of this Astrological Art (whereby to make Right Prognostications) must be acknowledged to be Obscure and Doubtful to Instance in that one Astrological Axiom [*That the Prognosticks of Comets do depend all upon Mars and Mercury.*] This is hard to be Demonstrated, for how can we prove what is the Influence of this or that Star in Heaven, as they may the Operation of Rhubarb or other Druggs on Earth? Yet Ptolomy (with others) make this Maxime (aforesaid) thus far probable, saying, The Effects of Comets (which are rarely Good, but mostly Evil) are of two sorts, 1. Such things as are Savage, Bloody, Mortiferous, &c. (portended by them) be ascribed to Mars, and other things that are Inconstant, Moveable and Uncertain, be ascribed to Mercury. The Assertion here may be true, though the Application be false; for *Astrologorum Decreta non sunt prioria*; their Rules are not Infallible, yet Examples have more perspicuity and certainty in them, I shall only give the two last and latest Exemplifications of Comets, the one in 1664, and the other in 1677. That in 64 was a forerunner of most Dreadful Dispensations, as the Sweeping pestilence in 65. and the Swallowing fire in 66. The former falls fowl upon Persons, the latter up-
on

on Habitations. The last in 1677 was a forerunner of the most Damnable Plot (yea a Complication of Plots) that ever Hell invented: Now God hath lighted up another Torch to give us a new Warning, that being forewarned we might be forearmed also, especially with those Arms of the Church, to wit, *prayers and Tears* (our *Desperate Malady* hath not yet met with an *Effectual Remedy*) lest those Matchless Mischiefs which are Imminent over us, may not also be Incumbent on us. There is certainly something more than ordinary God hath upon the Wheel, to lighten up such a Blaze as this in the very depth of Winter, which is a time Diametrically contrary to the very Nature of Comets, for Cold and Moist Weather is altogether unapt to produce those Hot and Dry Vapours whereof a Comet consisteth. A Winter Comet is therefore like Winter Thunder, which is commonly call'd the Worlds Wonder: The proper time of engendring those Meteors is Autumn, for in Spring-time there is supposed to be too much Moisture and too little Heat to congregate those Vapours, and in Summer-time there is so much Heat as plainly Segregate and Disperes those Exhalations, but Winter-time is wholly opposite to their existency, and quite contrary to the constituting of them: Therefore this Extraordinary and preternatural sign must needs signifie some Extraordinary and supernatural thing, even some Sweeping, Swinging or Scourging, yea some Cutting or Killing Dispensation, for the apparition Extraordinary (which I saw with my own Eyes) had a threefold Resemblance, 1. Of a Broom, 2. Of a Rod, 3. Of a Sword, 1. Of a large Broom, or Besom, yet Dreadfull to behold by its sparkling Aspect, as if God were coming to Sweep Babylon with his dreadful Besom of Destruction, as he hath promised, *Isa. 14. 22.* 23. 'Tis true, God hath his [*Scopas purgatorias*, as well as *perditionarias*;] his Brushing, as well as Crushing Besoms. The former is for Sion, which God Brushes only for its Ornament, the latter is for Babylon, which God Crushes also for its Overthrow. God grant this Unclean Spirit of Babylon may be Swept out of our Land, *Zach. 13. 2.* Even by a Parliamentary Besom. 2. Of a long and fiery Rod, wherewith God may Swinge or Scourge the Inhabitants of the Earth: God may indeed Chastize Sion with Rods (gently and favourably as a Father his Children, not to break their Bones, but their

their Stomachs,) but God will scourge *Babylon* with Scorpions,
 as *1 King 19. 12.* He will break her with his Rod of Iron, *Psal. 2.*
 9. like a Pottery Vessel, that can never be patcht together again:
 She shall feel the weight of God's mighty hand upon her, to Crush
 her to pieces, and to Grind her to Powder. 3. Of a prodigious
 flaming Sword, possibly not unlike that which God placed at the
 Garden of Eden, *Gen. 3.* 24. There the [Cherub] or Angel had [Lahar Chereb] a Flaming
 Sword, a great Elegancy in the Hebrew, and a Material Sword
 made of Steel; if brandisht. will Dart out bright and dazzling
 flames, according to that of *Virgils Aeneid. 8.* [*Ipsem Terribilem*
flammam quo Romulem] God bless us from this Material and Brand-
 isht flame-Tornirng or Glittering Sword, *Ezek. 21. 9, 10, 14, 28.*
 God may call for such a Sword, *Ezek. 38, 21. Levit. 26. 25.* If we
 give no better Audience and Obedience (than we have done) to
 the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, *Eph. 6. 17.* as
 we have sinned under the Sword of the Angel, which is the Pe-
 stilence, *1 Chron. 21. 16, 27.* So God may bring upon us the Sword
 of the Enemy, whose Mercies are Cruelties. Oh God forbid that
 he should Hiss for the Flies of *Egypt* to bite us, or the See of *Baby-*
lon (which is worse) to sting us, *Isa. 7. 18.* The Star (it self)
 that shouteth forth this flaming Sword, I have not beheld, it be-
 ing as yet hid in the Sun-beams, going down a little after the Sun,
 a little before the New Moon, and a little before Fiery Mars, be-
 ing not far from all these three in the Horizon, nigh to *Aquila*
 and to the *Milken Albys*; All which would afford over curious and
 too critical Speculations, according to the Rules of Astrological
 Art, which I therefore omit. Though Comets (in themselves
 simply considerate, or in their Houses wherein they are seen) do
 not make future Events uncontrollably legible, yet when they
 are placed in Conjunction with the Sacred Scripture, they are not
 without their proper Instruction, but foretell singular things, pro-
 vided the word of God (who is the Creator of Comets) be the Rule
 of that Interpretation. Though we Christians should not be afraid
 of the sign of Heaven, as the blind Heathen were, *Jer. 10. 2.* Yet
 may we not altogether despise those Divine Monitors and footsteps
 of Providence (though obscure) seeing 'tis God's Method (fre-
 quently

1680
The Star of the Star

quently Recorded in History) that when he is about to punish a City or Nation: he is wont to give them warning thereof first by some previous Prodigies, and to hang out some Conspicuous signs of Divine Displeasure in the Air, to be beheld of all Men: And though Comets (for the most part) are loud Preachers from Heaven (which Popish Prelates cannot silence) of Gods wrath for Mens sins, yet may they publish Joy to some, as well as sorrow to others: and the Setting of one may be the Rising of another; the falling of Old Favourites may be the Rise of New ones; as *Haman's* fall was *Mordecai's* rise. Thus the *Tiburtine* Sybel Interpreted that Comet (of a vast bigness) that appeared at Christ's Birth, saying, [*Idem puer major te est, &c.*] This Child that is now born is greater than thee. O *Roman* Emperour, and he comes to set up a Kingdom that shall destroy the *Roman* Kingdom. Might we have the same liberty to suppose this strange Star to be an Angel, as some do that in *Mat. 2. 2, 9, 10.* Then hath He a drawn flaming Sword in his hand Ready to destroy our *Jerusalem*, as that Angel had, *1 Chron. 21. 16.* Oh pray, pray, pray that God may repent him of that Evil, and say to the Angel, 'Tis enough, stay thy hand, and put up thy Sword into its sheath, *v. 97.* and *2 Sam. 24. 16.* but suppose it such an Angel as stood in *Balaam's* perverse way with a drawn Sword in his hand, *Numb. 22. 23.* or rather that Angel of the Covenant, out of whose mouth cometh a sharp Sword, *Rev. 19. 15. 21.* Oh pray, pray, that this Sword may slay not only the grand *Balaam* of *Rome*, but even *Babylon* too, and all her proud Helpers, as he hath there both Prophecyed and Promised: This is the Heavenly Prayer of C. N.

London, Printed for J. Wilkins, and J. Sampson, 1680.

